

# Western Washington Inter-Agency Dredging Coordination Workgroup—An Interagency, Cross-jurisdictional Success Story

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## **Abstract**

Management of dredging operations in western Washington requires the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to interact with agencies at the federal, state, and local levels. Dredging projects are often opposed at various levels due to poor communication, bureaucratic unresponsiveness to legitimate concerns and issues, and misunderstanding of methods and project necessity. Recognizing these constraints, the Seattle District, USACE, created an interagency work group in 1998 to facilitate collaboration among various agencies. A formal agreement between agencies allows staff to coordinate through the work group without seeking higher approval. Semi-annual meetings allow staff to exchange information, update activities, and direct work to the appropriate agency. The work group has been successful in removing barriers to timely concurrence on Endangered Species Act issues (6 months down to 2-4 weeks), eased tensions between agencies, and created a better understanding and acceptance of the need for and benefits of dredging in the maintenance of navigable waterways in western Washington. A beneficial use work group has also grown from this effort.